

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

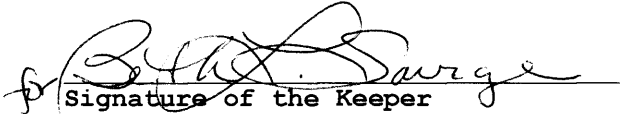
**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 00000816 Date Listed: 07/19/00

Bridgewater Center Historic District Litchfield CT  
Property Name County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

7/19/00  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Criteria and Significant Person

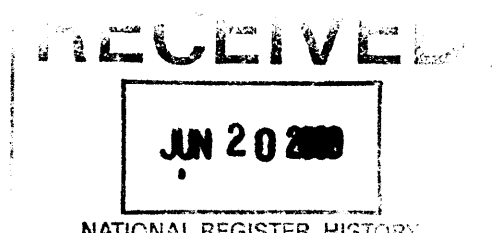
There is insufficient information to justify the association of Van Wyck Brooks with this district; thus, his name has been deleted as a significant person as has Criterion B.

This information has been discussed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



876

NATIONAL REGISTER, HISTORY  
& EDUCATION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name \_\_\_\_\_

other names/site number Bridgewater Center Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet.  not for publication

city or town Bridgewater  vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06752

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John W. Shannahan June 13, 2000  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
 John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission  
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Boyd L. Sarge 7/19/00

Bridgewater Center Historic District  
Name of Property

Litchfield, CT  
County and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
61	11	buildings
2	0	sites
2	0	structures
1	0	objects
66	11	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
GOVERNMENT/town hall  
EDUCATION/school/library  
RELIGION/religious facility  
FUNERARY/cemetery

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
GOVERNMENT/town hall  
EDUCATION/school/library  
RELIGION/religious facility  
FUNERARY/cemetery

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal  
MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival/Italian villa  
LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne  
20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classical Revival/  
Colonial Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
walls weatherboard  
brick/granite  
roof asphalt shingle  
other slate

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**Location**

Center Street: Center Park

Clapboard Road: 9, 10.

Hat Shop Hill: 25/39, 38/9, 19, 20, 33.

Main Street North: 10, 17, 20, 23, 33, 36, 46, 49, 52, 56, 59, 66, 69, 79, 89,  
38/24 (Bridgewater Center Cemetery), 99.

Main Street South: 5, 11, 27, 38/4 (ROW), 41, 46, 48, 55, 59, 62, 67, 80.

Warner Road: 1, 7, 11.

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Bridgewater Center Historic District, Litchfield County, Connecticut

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The Bridgewater Historic District, the town's institutional center, is a crossroads village that developed around the intersection of Route 133, Hat Shop Hill, and Clapboard Road. Until Route 133 slopes down into a valley at the north end of the district, it runs along the fairly level summit of a major north-south ridgeline, one of several that traverse the town. Called Main Street North above the crossroads and Main Street South below, this principal town thoroughfare forms the spine of the district, which extends from Warner Road on the south to Bridgewater Center Cemetery on the north (see district map). Center Park, a small linear green just southeast of the crossroads, is bounded by Center Street on the east and South Main Street on the west.

The district contains 77 resources (buildings and sites), of which 65 (86 percent) contribute to its historical and/or architectural significance. Contributing resources include 23 historic residential properties and their associated outbuildings and structures. Center Park and Bridgewater Center Cemetery are contributing sites. The institutional component consists of two churches, one school, the library, and the town hall. The only historic commercial building in the district is flanked by a small modern non-contributing bank. All the rest of the non-contributing resources are garages and sheds built after 1950.

There are four major buildings in the vicinity of the crossroads. The Congregational Church, on the north side of Clapboard Road, is an unusual structure for its period (Inventory #6; Photograph #1). Although built in 1807, with its gabled main block and projecting square tower, the church resembles a late colonial meetinghouse. The tower is capped by octagonal louvered belfry with a projecting cornice and spire. Multipaned windows with 20-over-20 lights are located in the center of the tower face and on either side. Similar windows with shutters line the side elevations. The facade pediment, which is interrupted by the tower, and the Greek Revival door surround were added about 1842. A Palladian window on the north end elevation was discovered and reinstalled in 1957 when a five-foot addition enlarged the pulpit. Other twentieth-century alterations include the reconstruction of the entrance and belfry cornices and remodeling of the interior.<sup>1</sup> The Congregational Chapel to the east was built in 1885; the cupola dates from 1897, when the building was enlarged (Inventory #7).

The southwest corner is occupied by St. Mark's Episcopal Church, a Gothic Revival edifice constructed of wood in 1859 (Inventory #51; Photograph #2). Gothic Revival elements include pointed-arch door and window openings, steep gables, and stepped buttresses. An almost free-standing square tower at the northeast corner, which has arched louvered openings in each face at the second level, now terminates with small intersecting gabled roofs. This section once supported a 90-foot spire constructed around a 65-foot chestnut post, which was taken down in 1929. On the facade of the main block, which is flanked by corner buttresses, a full-height slightly recessed arch frames the entrance and the arched windows above. A series of gables frame the windows on the side elevation. The parish house, the south wing of the church, was added in 1924.

Just south of St. Marks's is the Grange Hall, which once housed Centre School on the first floor and Town Hall on the second (Inventory #52). A long clapboarded two-story

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building, it has Greek Revival doorways at each end. The present Bridgewater Town Hall, erected across the street in 1904, has a gabled three-bay facade (Inventory #57; Photograph #3). Features include a square cupola, a nine-light window in the gable, and slightly pedimented flat window surrounds. The recessed main doorway has a small pent roof with brackets and there are shaped rafter ends and outriggers under the eaves of the main roof.

Just across from Center Park is the 1898 Charles B. Thompson Building, a large Queen Anne-style structure with a tower (Inventory #53; Photograph #4). Its historic commercial function is expressed by the bracketed frieze and cornices that cap the facade and define the storefront, which has large plate glass windows and a recessed doorway in the center. The same cornice detailing continues around the tower, just under the round-arched windows in each face. Decorative scroll-sawn cutwork elaborates the pedimented window caps. The low modern addition on the north houses the post office.

Center Park was created about 1856 when the Town of Bridgewater was incorporated (Inventory #1). A long narrow strip of land (approximately 50' x 650') was taken for the park from the eastern side of Main Street, then a much wider highway. The park originally extended east to include present-day Center Street and farther north alongside the Congregational Church. When this area was first landscaped by the Bridgewater Public Improvement Association in the 1870s, the park was planted with elm and maple trees, and a bandstand was erected in 1881. Now greatly reduced in size (about 15' x 200'), the present park was re-landscaped in 1995. Along its axis are a large fir and a few mature deciduous trees, some possibly nineteenth-century survivors, since similar trees continue in a line to the north on the church property. There are stone benches at either end of the park; the one on the south end is a VietNam and Korean War memorial, with a bronze plaque. A large boulder in the middle displays bronze plaques honoring the veterans of the World Wars (Inventory #2).

Center Cemetery at the north end of the district is bordered at the road by a cast-iron fence with anthemion finials (Inventory #48; Photograph #5). Although the cemetery was established in 1824, many of the gravestones date from the later nineteenth century and include a number of stone obelisks.

At the south end of the district, a library and a school designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style complete the institutional development of the center. The 1926 Burnham Library, constructed of random ashlar granite, has a hipped slate roof and pedimented entrance pavilion (Inventory #66; Photograph #6). Embellishments include Egyptian capitals and a swagged cartouche in the tympanum. An inverted scalloped molding that resembles a dentil course details the rakes and cornices of the pediment and continues under the eaves of the building. The round-arched main doorway has a fanlight and sidelights under flat-arched projecting cornices. Equally spaced double-hung windows on either side have six-over-sash and flared stone lintels with keyblocks. A rear wing addition was built in the 1970s.

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The yellow-brick Burnham School, which was built in 1929, has a lower hipped roof (Inventory #71; Photograph #7). Slightly projecting gabled entrance pavilions, centered in the long facade and end elevations, have recessed round-arched doorways with keyblocks and fanlights. On either side of the front door is a single window and a band of five windows, which contain 20-over-20 double-hung sash. The modern flat-roofed addition, set off by a connector on the north, was constructed about 1958.

Residential properties line the rest of the streets in the district. While some houses have a ridge-to-street orientation, gabled facades predominate. Most of the houses are set back at some distance from the road with deep front lawns. On Main Street, which is generally bordered by mature trees, frontages include sidewalks and/or picket fences along the highway easement.

The majority of the houses, generally vernacular dwellings that combine the late Federal and Greek Revival styles, were built between about 1820 and the Civil War. Regardless of their orientation or date of construction, there is little stylistic differentiation. Throughout this period, district houses are embellished with rectangular gabled windows in either the facade or end elevations. Most display cornice returns rather than full pediments. Doorway surrounds have high entablatures and pilasters of varying widths. The narrower pilasters flanking the doors at 67 South Main Street, 20 Hat Shop Hill, and 66 Main Street North, which are more characteristic of the Federal period, may be indicative of earlier dates of construction (Inventory #s 68, 10, 39; Photograph #s 8, 9). Although the 1835 George W. Warner House at the corner of Warner Road has more elements of the Greek Revival style, such as end pediments, corner pilasters, and a wide frieze board, the doorway does not have the very broad pilasters usually associated with this style (Inventory #72; Photograph #10).

Among the other more fully developed Greek Revivals is the George Lyon House just south of the Thompson Building, which has a wide hipped-roof portico sheltering two doorways (Inventory #55; Photograph #11). Even though the wing has the typically small attic windows of this style, it may be a modern addition. The frieze of the Oliver W. Phippeny House, a Greek Revival cottage, displays similar windows, but again, the doorway is transitional (Inventory #37; Photograph #12). A more conventional Greek Revival farmhouse is found at 79 North Main, a four-bay example with a boldly delineated flushboarded pediment and paneled pilasters (Inventory #43; Photograph #13).

The Charles H. Sanford House, an Italian Villa located north of the crossroads, was also built in the *ante bellum* period (Inventory #18; Photograph #14). In addition to heavily bracketed eaves and a cupola with round-arched windows, the Sanford House incorporates a recessed Tuscan porch at its southeast corner. The large wing on the north side of the main block is a later addition. A tall watertower, sheathed in wood, is located just off the southwest corner of the house (Inventory #19).

After the Civil War decorative Victorian porches were added to several older houses in the district, including the William G. Burnham House of 1851 on Main Street South (Inventory #63). A similar porch was once found on the Edwin G. Sanford House at the

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crossroads (Inventory #16). A notable porch on the Samuel Smith House on Hat Shop Hill displays scroll-sawn posts elaborated with brackets (Inventory #8; Photograph #15). The porch and bracketed entryway of the c. 1820 Elijah Peck House was probably added when this Federal-style residence was moved to its present location, where it now serves as the headquarters of the Bridgewater Historical Society (Inventory #58; Photograph #16).

The Peck House was moved to make way for the Hatch-Van Wyck Brooks House which faces Center Park (Inventory #3; Photograph #17). One of two Colonial Revival-style houses in the district, this Four-Square is detailed with a recessed Palladian window in the center of the facade and diamond-paned sash in the dormer windows, and has a wraparound veranda, supported by doubled columns. A Colonial Revival facade porch and a fanlight over the door are some of the features of the other example of this style at 36 Main Street North (Inventory #28). Columned porches were added to several older houses, including the Queen Anne at 69 Main Street North and the Federal-style Simon R. Weeks House (Inventory #s 41, 22).

The following inventory list includes all the contributing and non-contributing resources in the district. Inventory numbers correspond to numbers used in the text and on the district map. Dates of construction and many of the historic names for houses were taken from *Landmarks of Bridgewater*, 1958, and dates were generally confirmed by architectural evidence and/or tax assessor's records.



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Inv. #	Address	Historic Name/Style/Type/Date	C/NC	Ph. #
<b>CENTER STREET</b>				
1.	--	CENTER PARK, c. 1850	C	
2.	--	War Memorial (World War I and II), 1929, 1949	C	
<b>CLAPBOARD ROAD</b>				
3.*	9	HATCH-VAN WYCK BROOKS HOUSE, Colonial Revival Four-Square, 1910	C	17
4.	9	barn, c. 1910	C	
5.	9	shed, c. 1910	C	
6.	10	BRIDGEWATER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Colonial/Greek Revival, 1807, 1842	C	1
7.	10	CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, 1885, 1897	C	1
<b>HAT SHOP HILL</b>				
	25/39	vacant, r.o.w only		
	38/9	vacant lot		
8.	19	SAMUEL SMITH HOUSE, Colonial/Federal, 1838	C	15
9.	19	garage, 1960	NC	
10.	20	SAMUEL CLARK HOUSE, Federal/Greek Revival, c. 1835	C	8
11.	20	shed, 1970	NC	
12.	33	JOHN YOUNG HOUSE, 19th-century vernacular, 1839	C	
13.	33	garage, c. 1930	C	
14.	33	shed, c. 1960	NC	
15.	33	shed, c. 1960	NC	
<b>MAIN STREET NORTH</b>				
16.	10	EDWIN G. SANFORD HOUSE, vernacular Greek Revival, c. 1860	C	
17.	17	SIMON R. WEEKS TAILOR SHOP, c. 1840	C	
18.	20	CHARLES H. SANFORD HOUSE, Italian Villa, c. 1850	C	14
19.	20	watertower, late 1800s (?)	C	14
20.	20	garage, c. 1960	NC	
21.	20	shed, c. 1880	C	
22.	23	SIMON R. WEEKS HOUSE, Federal, c. 1830; Colonial Revival porch	C	
23.	23	watertower, early 1900s (?)	C	
24.	23	garage, c. 1960	NC	
25.	33	NORTHRUP PALMER HOUSE, 19th-century vernacular, c. 1890	C	
26.	33	garage, c. 1920	C	
27.	33	shed, c. 1920	C	
28.	36	Colonial Revival, c. 1911	C	
29.	36	garage, c. 1960	NC	

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30.	46	THOMPSON CARRIAGEHOUSE, Queen Anne, 1898 (now a residence)	C	
31.	49	LYMAN SMITH HOUSE, 19th-century vernacular, c. 1850	C	
32.	49	barn, 1901	C	
33.	52	Colonial Cape, c. 1800 or earlier	C	
34.	56	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
35.	56	shed, c. 1900	C	
36.	56	garage, c. 1900	C	
37.	59	OLIVER W. PHIPPENY HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	12
38.	59	garage, c. 1930	C	
39.	66	vernacular, c. 1820	C	
40.	66	shed, c. 1900	C	
41.	69	Queen Anne, 1898	C	
42.	69	shed, c. 1960	NC	
43.	79	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	13
44.	79	shed, c. 1900	C	
45.	79	shed, c. 1900	C	
46.	89	19th-century vernacular, c. 1880	C	
47.	89	barn, c. 1880	C	
48.	--	38/24 BRIDGEWATER CENTER CEMETERY, est. 1824	C	5
49.	99	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
50.	99	barn, c. 1880	C	

## MAIN STREET SOUTH

51.	5	ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Gothic Revival, c. 1859	C	2
52.	11	GRANGE HALL, Greek Revival, c. 1854	C	
53.	27	CHARLES B. THOMPSON BUILDING (Village Store), Queen Anne, 1899	C	4
54.	27	modern bank, 1964	NC	
	38/4	vacant r.o.w. only		
55.	41	GEORGE LYON HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1860	C	11
56.	41	shed, c. 1980	NC	
57.*	46	BRIDGEWATER TOWN HALL, 1904	C	3
58.	48	ELIJAH PECK HOUSE, Federal, 1820 (moved c. 1910)	C	16
59.	48	BURNHAM COTTAGE, 1811 (moved here 1956)	C	
60.	55	Italian Villa, c. 1850 with modern facade addition	C	
61.	55	cabin, c. 1900	C	
62.	55	studio/workshop, c. 1900	C	
63.	59	WILLIAM G. BURNHAM HOUSE, Greek Revival, 1851	C	
64.	59	barn, c. 1880	C	
65.	59	poolhouse, 1970	NC	
66.	62	BURHAM MEMORIAL LIBRARY, Neo-Classical Revival, 1926	C	6
67.	62	shed, 1925	C	
68.	67	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	9
69.	67	garage, c. 1900	C	
70.	67	shed, c. 1900	C	

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71.	80	BURNHAM SCHOOL, Neo-Classical Revival, 1929, addition. c. 1958	C	7
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**WARNER ROAD**

72.	1	GEORGE W. WARNER HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1835	C	10
73.	1	cottage, c. 1920	C	
74.	7	E. WARNER HOUSE, Greek Revival cottage, 1856	C	
75.	7	barn/garage, 1916	C	
76.	11	vernacular Colonial Revival, c. 1900	C	
77.	11	barn (L-shape), c. 1900	C	

\* These properties front on Center Street, which is not used as an official street address.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

c. 1800 - c. 1950

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

~~Van Wyck Brooks (d. 1963)~~

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

not known

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Burnham Memorial Library, Bridgewater



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Bridgewater Center Historic District, Litchfield County, Connecticut

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The Bridgewater Center Historic District encompasses an exceptionally cohesive crossroads village that embodies and illustrates 150 years of historic civic and residential development. The district's fine collection of institutional, commercial, and domestic architecture includes many well-preserved examples of the Federal, Greek Revival, and Queen Anne styles, as well as several significant examples of Neo-Classical Revival and Colonial Revival architecture.

**Historical Background and Significance**

Settled in the mid 1700s as an outlying community of New Milford and incorporated as a separate town in 1856, Bridgewater represents the end stage of one of the last major colonial population movements in Connecticut...the northward migration along the principal river valleys in the western part of the state. Since it was located just above the convergence of the Housatonic and Shepaug rivers, Bridgewater was first known as New Milford Neck, or simply the Neck, part of the land purchased for the New Milford Plantation in 1702. Although settlement in New Milford on the west bank of the Housatonic began in 1707, development of the Neck, isolated by its riverine borders, was delayed for many years. Few new Milford proprietors actually settled there. Some like Governor Robert Treat, the leading proprietor and largest landowner, reserved their Neck allotments for descendants; his grandsons were among the first to live there. Others sold their shares in the Neck to speculators, especially in the 1730s, a period when land scarcity drove up prices. The pace of settlement picked up after the Housatonic was bridged in 1737. The Neck became known as Bridgewater, with a school and burying ground established there by mid-century. Although there was a small village at Southville on the Housatonic River, most of settlers lived on isolated scattered farmsteads.<sup>2</sup>

In 1771, weary of the long journey to attend church services at the New Milford meetinghouse, Neck inhabitants sought permission to worship locally during the winter. "Winter privileges" were granted for a period of three years and renewed periodically after the Revolution. Later, after several petitions to the General Assembly to form a separate Congregational Church society, the Bridgewater Parish of New Milford was officially established in 1803. Construction began on the present Bridgewater Congregational Church in 1807 (Inventory #6). Evidently the site was selected for its central geographic location, since, at that time few people lived near the crossroads (Inventory #33). Although a lottery was held to raise money for a building fund, the church was not completed or even painted for several years. Repairs done in 1831 and 1842 included work on the steeple and new clapboards replaced the shingles on at least three sides of the building. Presumably the Greek Revival features were added in 1842.

Not surprisingly, the church soon became a locus of a bustling village. Tradesmen and shopkeepers congregated nearby, building homes and shops. In fact, most of the houses in the district were standing by the time St. Mark's Episcopal Church was erected across the street in 1859 (Inventory #s 52, 51). Elijah Peck built his house and store across from the church (Inventory #58); the house was relocated down the street about 1910. Tailor Simon Weeks built his house and shop just north of the Congregational Church about 1840 (Inventory #s 22, 17). When Weeks served as postmaster, his tailor shop doubled as the

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post office. Later in the century, a meat market (no longer extant) was located on the Samuel Smith property on Hat Shop Hill (Inventory #8), and farther up the road, beyond the district, were the hat factories run by the Sanford family, the basis of Bridgewater's economy from 1823 until 1870.

The Sanfords were descendants of New Milford proprietor Nehemiah Sanford. Glover Sanford, who started the business, lived with his son Frederick across the street from the factory on Hat Shop Hill (National Register, 1989) and two of his other sons lived in the district. Charles H. Sanford, postmaster and first selectman after the town was incorporated in 1856, was responsible for the exceptional Italian Villa just north of the crossroads (Inventory #18) and Edwin G. Sanford lived next door in a much smaller Greek Revival-style house (Inventory #16). Both men were members of the Episcopal Church; Edwin donated the land across the street from his house for the present church. After the company relocated to Bridgeport in 1870, Edwin sold his house, but Charles kept the villa for a seasonal residence.

Among the several other Bridgewater natives and residents who made architectural contributions to the district was Charles B. Thompson, who was known as the "Mail Order King." A flamboyant manufacturer and purveyor of exotic toiletries by mail, Thompson started his company in the "Old Rancho," the former Northrup Palmer House on North Main Street (Inventory #25). Because of the volume of business generated by his ingenious promotion and sales schemes, a new larger factory building was erected in the center in 1899 (Inventory #53). Thompson's office was in the third floor of the 50-foot tower; his secret compounds were developed in the basement laboratories; but most of the space was used for packing and shipping. The scale of the operation was impressive: up to 45 people were employed; more than \$4000 per month was spent on postage and advertising. As many as a thousand mail orders a day poured in the Bridgewater Post office for "Perfumo," Thompson's principal product, which he claimed was made from a rare mineral found only in Arabia. Orders were sent in by thousands of field agents all over the United States, who were rewarded with prizes for meeting sales quotas. Before postal laws brought an end to his empire, Thompson built an elaborate Queen Anne-style house across the road from the earlier factory. The house was destroyed by fire but its matching carriagehouse, now a residence, still stands (Inventory #30). It is said that postmaster Charles Hatch resented the burden of the mail-order business, while Thompson always claimed it was his patronage that made it possible for Hatch to build his own impressive Colonial Revival house across the street in 1910 (Inventory #3).

Captain William D. Burnham (1847-1919) made a name for himself much farther afield. When his family moved to Bridgewater from Cornwall in 1851, they lived in Burnham Cottage, then located in the middle of the present cemetery. It now stands next to the Bridgewater Historical Society (Inventory #59). Burnham went to sea at age 14 and rose through the ranks to command clipper ships and other sailing vessels. He established the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company in 1898, soon after the Hawaiian Islands were ceded to the United States. His original fleet of four freighters, which grew to 28 by 1914, was requisitioned by the government during World War I. Before his death in 1919, Burnham consulted on the construction of the railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico

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and the Panama Canal. The chief beneficiary of his estate was the Town Of Bridgewater. The bequest, designated for educational purposes and received after the death of his wife, funded the construction of the Burnham Memorial Library and the Burnham School (Inventory #s 66, 71).

Van Wyck Brooks, who purchased the Hatch House in 1949, was one of many well-known artists and writers who came to live in Litchfield County (Inventory #3). A literary scholar and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1937 for *The Flowering of New England*, the first of a five-volume series on American literary history, Brooks lived in Bridgewater until his death in 1963. Visitors to his home included other celebrities such as Carl Sandburg, Mark Van Doren, Norman Mailer, and Frederic March. At least two of his guests, sculptor Alexander Calder and writer William Styron, lived nearby in Roxbury.

**Architectural Significance**

Remarkably little modern development intrudes upon the historic architectural integrity of Bridgewater Center Historic District. Contiguous historic properties line the roads, conveying the nineteenth-century origins of this crossroads village and its progress through the early twentieth century. Center Park, although reduced in size, still provides a landscaped focus for the crossroads, where an impressive, well-preserved group of stylistically diverse institutional and commercial buildings span the nineteenth century. This historic architectural framework for the district is further delineated by the early twentieth-century institutional buildings at the southern end. With broad front lawns and gabled facades, most of the historic houses maintain the rural architectural rhythm so characteristic of nineteenth-century village streetscapes. The scale, gable orientation, or setback of some civic structures, such as the turn-of-the-century Town Hall, contribute to this pattern. Period outbuildings, especially the tailor shop and the two watertowers, add to the historic atmosphere, as does the nineteenth-century cemetery at the head of the district.

With a few notable exceptions, the historic houses in the district are local interpretations of Federal and Greek Revival styles. The characteristic simplicity of their well-preserved facades, which often combine features of both styles, is enhanced by the almost universal use of white paint. The movement from the attenuation of the Federal style to the bolder Greek Revival was quite subtle, even when expressed on the newer side-hall plan houses in the district, which include the Samuel Clark House on Hat Shop Hill or the dwelling at 67 Main Street South (Inventory #s 19, 68; Photograph #s 8, 9). The generally conservative nature of the district's domestic architecture, however, is shown in the late 1830s by the George Warner House or the Oliver Phippeny House; both still utilized a basic gabled colonial form and plan, as well as a ridge-to-street orientation (Inventory #s 72, 37; Photograph #10, 11). By mid-century a well-preserved temple-fronted farmhouse was built at 79 Main Street North (Inventory #43, Photograph #13), but this house is the only example in the district of the fully integrated Greek Revival style. Even as late as 1860, applied Greek Revival detailing still elaborated older colonial forms, as demonstrated by the George Lyon House (Inventory #55; Photograph #11).



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Among the individually distinctive houses is the Italian Villa built by Charles H. Sanford about 1850 (Inventory #18; Photograph #14). Exceptionally well-preserved with an atypical rectangular plan and recessed porch, the Sanford House and the other villas owned by the family on Hat Shop Hill (outside the district) are sophisticated interpretations of a style found more often in Connecticut's cities. The Hatch House across the street is another example of urban influence. It is a fine representation of the Colonial Revival Four-Square, a style popular in streetcar suburbs of the early 1900s (Inventory #3; Photograph #17). Embellished with Neo-Classical exterior features, this well-preserved house reportedly has a fully detailed period interior.

The two churches in the district demonstrate the contrasting sectarian influences on ecclesiastical design that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. The essentially conservative nature of Congregational architecture, at least prior to the Greek Revival period, is conveyed by the 1807 Bridgewater Church (Inventory #6; Photograph #1). A focal point for the district because of its commanding position and the basic integrity of its boldly delineated form, this church is clearly patterned on the Congregational meetinghouses of the colonial period. St. Mark's is a good example of a Gothic Revival-style country church, a type favored by this denomination after about 1840 (Inventory #51; Photograph #2). Its wooden construction is rather unusual; most examples of this style, which is derived from the Anglican parish churches and chapels of rural England, are stone masonry. The loss of the tall spire, a symbolic representation of Episcopalian faith, is unfortunate, but the rest of the original building and its later matching wing are well preserved.

With its unusual form and eclectic design, the Charles B. Thompson Building makes a dramatic architectural statement, an effect heightened by its village setting (Inventory #53; Photograph #4). The Queen Anne tower has a residential appearance, but the well-preserved main block could have graced any late nineteenth-century downtown business district. Its continued use as a store has helped preserve its exceptional integrity of form and detail, a state of preservation only slightly compromised by the modern post office addition on the right elevation.

The Burnham School and Burnham Memorial Library are a fitting summation to the architectural development of the district (Inventory #s 66, 71; Photograph #s 6, 7). These handsome Neo-Classical Revival buildings are skillfully designed structures with superior integrity. Their modern wings are carefully sited to limit the impact upon the original designs. In addition, both buildings maintain the residential setback, thus preserving the continuity of the historic streetscape.

## End Notes:

1. For original interior details and alterations, see J. Frederick Kelly, *Early Connecticut Meetinghouses*, Vol. 1.
2. Southville was inundated when the Housatonic River was dammed to form Lake Lillinonah.

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**

"House that stamps built is postscript to an era." *The News-Times*. May 21, 1995.

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Olivea, Charles Laurence. "Origin of Town Names." Photocopy on file Burnham Memorial Library.

Orcutt, Samuel. *History of the Towns of New Milford & Bridgewater, Connecticut*. Hartford: Case Lockwood & Brainerd Press, 1882.

*Landmarks of Bridgewater*. Bridgewater Historical Society, Bridgewater, Connecticut, 1958 (forward by Van Wyck Brooks).

"Mail order king puts Bridgewater in big time." *Waterbury Republican*. August, 1993.

Map of Bridgewater, c. 1870.

*75 Years: the Changing face of Bridgewater, 1920-1995 as witnessed by Mary Johnson Allen and Dorothy Allen Gustafson*. n.p., 1995.

Town Greens. Statewide Architectural and Historical Survey, 172 properties. Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and Connecticut Historical Commission, 1996.

**10. Geographical Data**

**UTM References:**

1. 18 635050 4599600
2. 18 636240 4599620
3. 18 636410 4598890
4. 18 636160 4598880
5. 18 636980 4599260

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The district boundaries are shown on the attached map drawn to scale from Bridgewater Tax Assessor's maps.

**Boundary Justification:** The district boundaries encompass all the surviving contributing resources associated with the development of Bridgewater Center during its period of significance. The boundaries extend around the historic perimeter of the village center, a discrete geographic area with a high concentration of resources, and exclude open space and/or more scattered development beyond.

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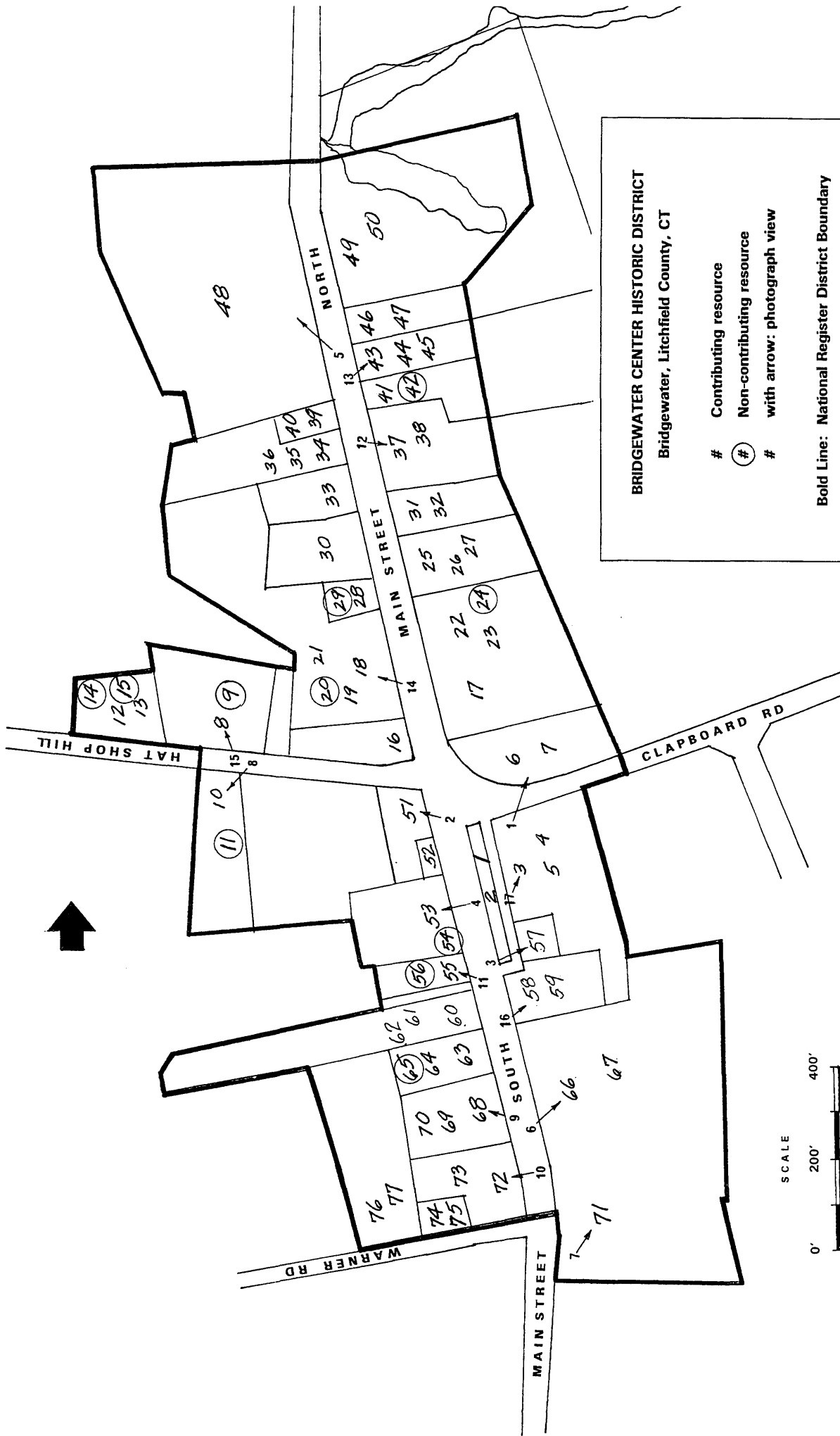
**List of Photographs**

Photographer: Jan Cunningham, Cunningham Preservation Associates

Dates: February & March 1999

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

1. BRIDGEWATER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH & CHAPEL, facing NE
2. ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, facing NW
3. BRIDGEWATER TOWN HALL, facing E
4. CHARLES B. THOMPSON BUILDING, facing W
5. BRIDGEWATER CENTER CEMETERY, facing WW
6. BURNHAM LIBRARY, facing NE
7. BURNHAM SCHOOL, facing NE
8. SAMUEL CLARK HOUSE, facing SW
9. 67 Main Street South, facing NW
10. GEORGE W. WARNER HOUSE, facing W
11. GEORGE LYON HOUSE, facing NW
12. OLIVER W. PHIPPENY HOUSE, facing E
13. 79 Main Street North, facing NE
14. CHARLES H. SANFORD HOUSE, facing NW
15. SAMUEL SMITH HOUSE, facing NW
16. ELIJAH PECK HOUSE, facing NE
17. HATCH-VAN WYCK BROOKS HOUSE, facing NE



**BRIDGEWATER CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
 Bridgewater, Litchfield County, CT

# Contributing resource  
 # Non-contributing resource  
 # with arrow: photograph view

**Bold Line: National Register District Boundary**  
**Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC 4/99**

